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THE DEVELOPMENT OF THE APPRECIATION OF MOUNTAIN SCENERY IN MODERN TIMES*

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In the literature of the Middle Ages we are struck with the same lack of interest in mountains and mountain scenery which is so characteristic of Roman writers. No one seems to have crossed the mountains for any other reason than direst necessity; no poet spoke of them, and if the minnesingers of the twelfth and thirteenth centuries were impressed by the beauty of woodland and field and the songs of birds, they failed to draw inspiration from this side of nature. Even to Dante, the greatest of medieval bards, the mountains were inconceivable except as huge masses of broken stones and crags: their majesty entirely escaped him, and he viewed them as objects of terror only fit to guard the entrance to his innermost hell.¹ The general feeling of awe and disgust with which the Alps were early regarded is seen in a letter of Master John de Bremble, a monk of Christ Church, who in 1188 found himself at the top of the Great St. Bernard Pass; he speaks of "shuddering at the hell of valleys" below him and prays the Lord to restore him to his brethren that he may tell them never to approach "this place of torment."²

And yet the Alpine chains were familiar objects to great numbers of travelers bent on missions of religion and healing. At the bases of the great routes across them missionaries built monasteries and churches, and around them villages slowly grew; while in the passes above hospices were founded to receive the crowds of pilgrims from the north and west of Europe³ who poured across the mountains on their way to Rome. Thus a hospice on the Great St. Bernard has existed since 859, while a monastery stood on the site as early as 812. The date of its refounding by Bernard of Menthon is generally given as 962 or 968, but must have been in the next century.⁴ From the Italian side, too, invalids ventured north to seek health in the mineral waters of Switzerland and Germany, like Baden

* In a recent paper (The Ancient Appreciation of Mountain Scenery, *Classical Journ.*, Vol. 11, 1915-16, No. 2, pp. 70-84; abstracted in the July, 1916, *Review*, pp. 64-65) the writer discussed the subject of the Greco-Roman appreciation of mountain scenery. In the present essay the development of esthetic interest in this phase of nature through the Middle Ages and modern times will be traced very briefly.

¹ For Dante's repugnance see Ruskin: *Modern Painters*, Vol. 3, Ch. 15, §17; Freshfield, *Notes on Old Tracts*, IV: The Mountains of Dante, *Alpine Journ.*, Vol. 10, 1881, pp. 400-405; Brentari, *Boll. del Club Alpino Italiano*, 1887, No. 54, pp. 12-61.

² See Stubbs: *Lectures on the Study of Medieval and Modern History*, and Francis Gribble: *The Early Mountaineers*, 1899, p. 4. For a good example of medieval theories of phenomena encountered on mountains, see Sir John Mandeville's account of Mount Athos.

³ Especially from England, Ireland, and Iceland.

⁴ See discussion of Bernard's date by A. Lütolf in *Tübinger Theolog. Quartalschr.*, Vol. 61, 1879, pp. 179-207, who gives 1081 as the date of his death. The monastery, possibly then situated in Bourg St. Pierre, is first mentioned about 812: "monasterium quod est situm in monte Jovis"; see Gremand: *Documents relatifs à l'histoire du Valais*, Vol. 1, p. 21.

in Aargau. But despite all this, we hear of no mountain ascents for their own sake, nor praise of mountain grandeur, until the poet Petrarch, in 1336, following the classical example of Lucretius, climbed Mont Ventoux near Avignon in Provence. In a letter to a friend the poet says he had long cherished the ambition to ascend this mountain; he magnifies the difficulty of the undertaking—it is only 6,270 feet in height—but the view fills him with noble thoughts.⁵ The following year he went to live at Vaucluse and devoted himself to a life of study and communion with nature in its wildest moods, climbing hills and traversing gorges, thus distinguishing himself from all other medieval scholars.

Though Petrarch was the first to break with the usual vague terror inspired by the mountains and the first to record sentiments of admiration, his ascent was preceded by two others. The earliest climb recorded in modern mountaineering history seems to have been that of the Roche Melon (Monte de Roccia Melone, 11,600 feet) near Susa in Savoy. The knight Bonifacio Rotario d'Asti is said to have founded a chapel on its top in 1358 and to have placed within it a bronze statue of the Virgin (now in the cathedral church of Susa); but there is a description of an earlier attempted ascent recorded by an anonymous chronicler of the monastery of Novalesa, written in the first half of the eleventh century and based on an account given to the chronicler by an old man who had tried to reach the summit.⁶ The mountain, "arx Romulea," was supposed to have been the treasure home of a wicked King Romulus and to have been infested with wild beasts. In June, 1588, the Seigneur de Villamont visited the chapel with two guides, and his account is the earliest detailed one of any important Alpine climb.⁷ The other ascent mentioned was that of the Pic Canigou in the Pyrenees by King Peter III of Aragon (1236–1285);⁸ he found a lake at the top which was the home of a monstrous dragon. It will be seen from these accounts that the people of the Middle Ages not only had physical difficulties to overcome in climbing mountains, but those of a mental sort as well, for they believed that mountain regions were haunted by winged dragons, gnomes, goblins, and all kinds of evil spirits.

Between the date of Petrarch's ascent and the sixteenth century several mountain climbs are recorded. Thus towards the end of the fifteenth century the artist and scientist, Leonardo da Vinci, ascended Monboso, as is attested by fragmentary passages in his "Literary Works."⁹ Monboso

⁵ See his account of the ascent on June 26th in a Latin letter (*De rebus familiaribus*, Lib. IV, Ep. I) translated by Henry Reeve in his "Life of Petrarch" (Blackwood's Foreign Classics for English Readers); the original letter is given by Gribble, *op. cit.*, App. D, pp. 264-270, and Reeve's translation, *ibid.*, pp. 18-24.

⁶ See Gribble, *op. cit.*, App. A, pp. 257-258, for the chronicle and his translation on pp. 5-7.

⁷ See Gribble, *op. cit.*, App. B, pp. 259-261, and translation, *ibid.*, pp. 7-10; the Englishman Thos. Coryate, in his "Crudities Hastily Gobbled Up," 1611, also described it in the early seventeenth century. Murray's "Guide to Switzerland" gives an account of the ascent of the Knight d'Asti.

⁸ See chronicle of Fra Salimbene of Parma in Gribble, *op. cit.*, App. C, pp. 262-263, and translation, *ibid.*, pp. 15-17.

⁹ Edited from original manuscripts by J. P. Richter, 1883; see especially note 1060; also part of a letter in Gribble, *op. cit.*, App. E, p. 271, translated by Mrs. R. C. Bell, *ibid.*, pp. 25-26.

has been identified by some with Mt. Monbego, 9,326 feet high, in the Maritime Alps; by others with Monte Rosa.¹⁰ In June, 1492, Charles VIII of France, while passing through Dauphiné, was impressed with the rocky Mt. Aiguille near Grenoble (about 7,000 feet), and ordered his chamberlain De Baupré to ascend it; the latter deposited three crosses on the top, heard mass, and remained there about a week. This ascent is attested by a grave deposition of a special commissioner, now in the archives of Grenoble,¹¹ which is the first detailed account of an ascent still considered difficult. In the New World, it is believed that Diego de Ordaz was the first European to ascend the volcano Popocatepetl in Mexico (17,850 feet); the only proof, however, is a letter to the King of Spain written by Cortez, in which he says he sent a party of Spaniards in 1519 to the top of a "burning mountain" to get sulphur for making gunpowder. In 1522 Francisco Montaña lowered himself into the crater 450 feet—an undertaking now commonly performed by Indian sulphur miners by means of rope-ladders.¹²

It is not, however, until the sixteenth century that we first find indications that the old aversion had begun to yield to a scientific curiosity and admiration. This interest, culminating in the modern romantic sentiment, was of very slow growth and did not burst forth all at once in Savoy a hundred and fifty years ago, as is so generally assumed.¹³ It seems to have

¹⁰ So Richter, *op. cit.*, and G. Uzielli: "Leonardo da Vinci e le Alpe," *Boll. del Club Alpino Italiano*, Vol. 23, 1890, No. 56; the latter shows that the name Monbosa existed on maps of Monte Rosa as late as 1740 and that a spur of the mountain is still called Monte Bo; he is followed by Douglas Freshfield in his review of Uzielli's article, *Proc. Royal Geogr. Soc.*, Vol. 14, 1892, pp. 345-347, who there recanted his earlier view that it was Monte Viso (*ibid.*, June, 1884); Freshfield believes the painter reached the Col d'Ollen, 10,000 feet. Coolidge: *Swiss Travel and Swiss Guide Books*, 1889, p. 163, believes the peak in question is the Monbego (9,326 feet), in the Maritime Alps.

¹¹ See Gribble, *op. cit.*, App. F, p. 272 *seqq.* and translation, *ibid.*, p. 29 *seqq.*

¹² See *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, 11th edit., 1910-1911, article Popocatepetl; cf. also A. Lunn: *The Exploration of the Alps*, 1914, Ch. 2, p. 30; he wrongly gives the date of ascent as 1521.

¹³ On the growth of interest in the Swiss Alps see the following works:
G. E. von Haller. *Bibliothek der Schweizer-Geschichte*, Berne, 1785. [For bibliographical details, see Vol. I.]

B. Studer: *Geschichte der physischen Geographie der Schweiz bis 1815*, Zurich, 1863. [A marvelous storehouse of facts.]

G. Studer: *Ueber Eis und Schnee*, Berne, 1869-83. [Contains the best bibliography of Alpine literature.]

J. Frey: *Die Alpen im Lichte verschiedener Zeitalter*, Berlin, 1877 (No. 274 of Virchow and Holtzendorf's *Sammlung gemeinverständlicher wissenschaftlicher Vorträge*).

E. Osenbrüggen: *Die Entwicklungsgeschichte des Schweizreisens* (Ch. 1 of Vol. 1 of his "Wanderstudien aus der Schweiz," Schaffhausen, 1867).

L. Friedländer: *Ueber die Entstehung und Entwicklung des Gefühls für das Romantische in der Natur*, Leipzig, 1873 (reprinted in Vol. 2, pp. 206-259, of his "Darstellungen aus der Sittengeschichte Roms"). [Contains sketchy summaries of the history down to recent times.]

B. Schwarz: *Die Erschliessung der Gebirge*, Leipzig, 1885. [Traces the development in detail until the ascent of Mont Blanc by De Saussure in 1787.]

G. Peyer: *Geschichte des Reisens in der Schweiz*, Basel, 1885.

Sir Leslie Stephen: *The Playground of Europe*, 1871, Chs. 1 and 2.

Wm. Longman: *Modern Mountaineering and the History of Alpine Clubs*, *Alpine Journ.*, Vol. 8, 1876-78, suppl., p. 39 *seqq.*

W. A. B. Coolidge: *Swiss Travel and Swiss Guide Books*, 1889. [Important work, already mentioned in footnote 10; frequently used as a source in this part of the present paper.]

W. A. B. Coolidge: *The Alps in Nature*, 1898. [The best work on all phases of the Alps, sporting, social, political, and historical.]

Francis Gribble: *The Early Mountaineers*, 1899. [Already mentioned in footnote 2; the most readable book on the pioneers of Alpine travel.]

Francis Gribble: *The Story of Alpine Climbing*, 1904. [Smaller work.]

Arnold Lunn: *The Exploration of the Alps*, 1914. (Series: Home University Library.)

G. W. Young: *Wind and Hill*, 1909. [On the poetry of mountaineering.]

Arnold Lunn: *The Englishman in the Alps*, 1913. [An anthology. Other Alpine anthologies are E. Baker and F. E. Ross: *The Voice of the Mountains*, 1905; and H. Spender: *In Praise of Switzerland*, 1912.]

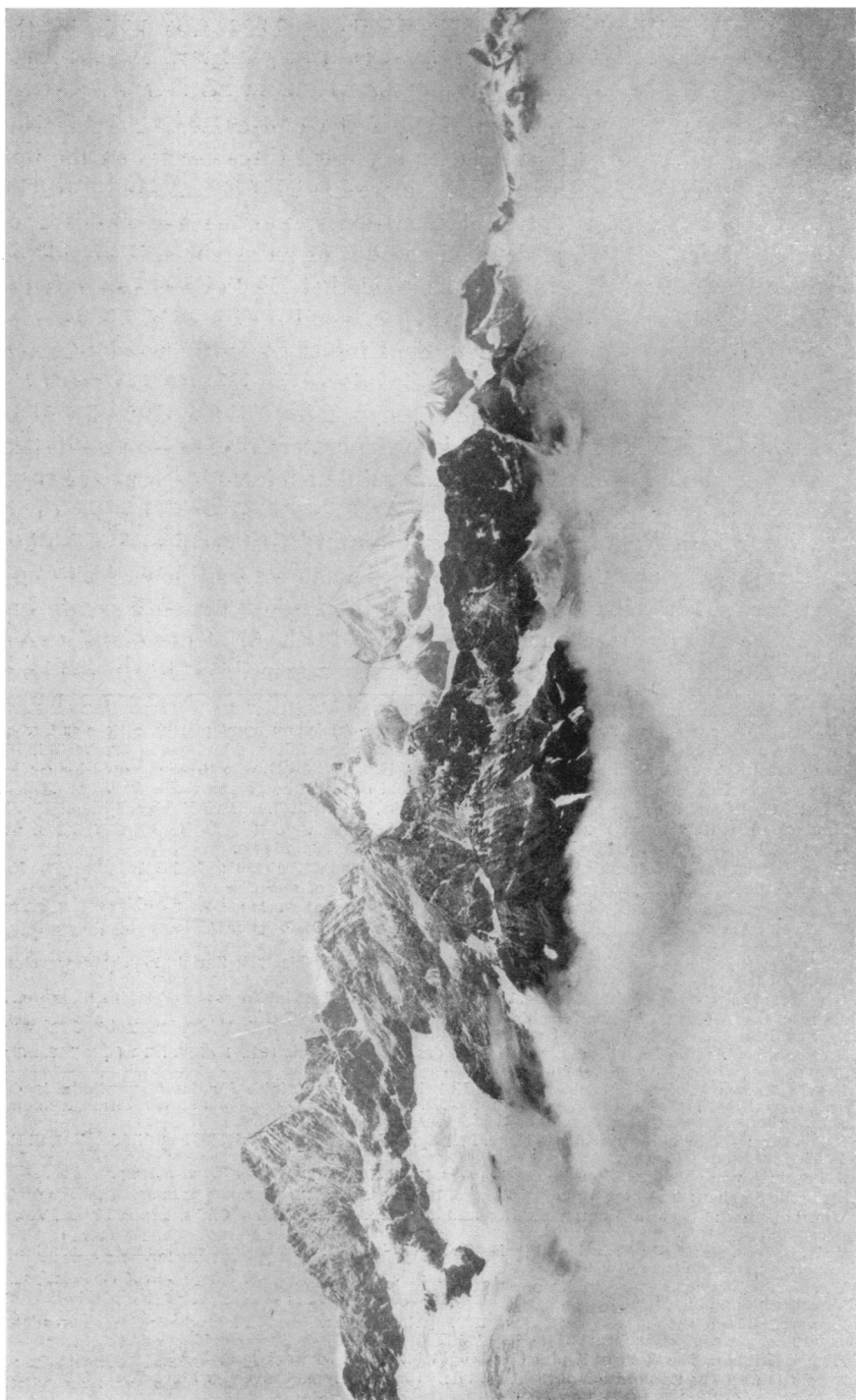


FIG. 1.—Peaks of the Pennine Alps from the Matterhorn hut: from left to right, Obergabelhorn, Rothorn, Weishorn.

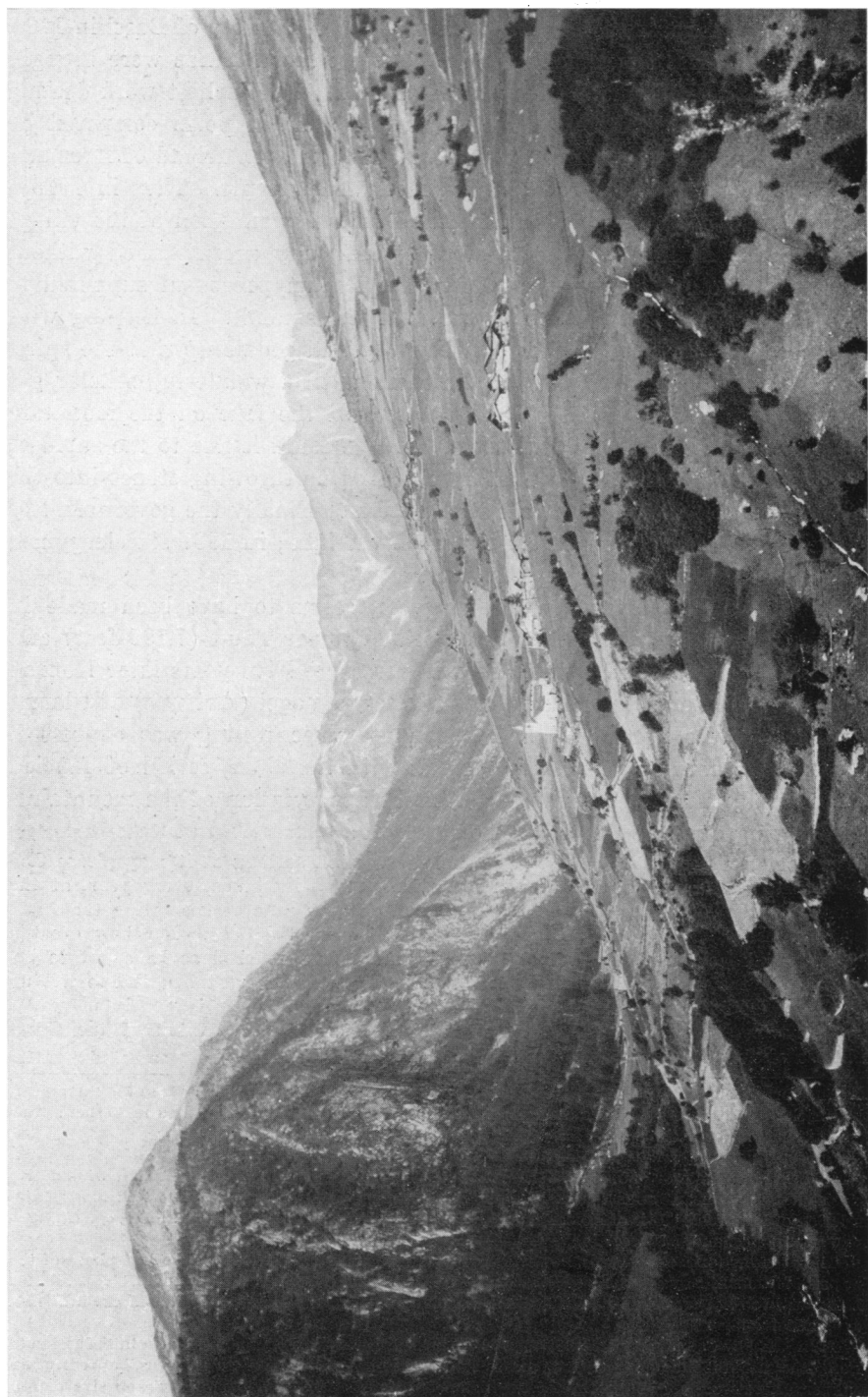


FIG. 2—The seven villages on the Italian side of the Great St. Bernard Pass route.

received great impetus at the foundation of the University of Basel in 1460, when, for the first time, men of scientifically trained minds were brought into contact with the mountains of Switzerland. The earliest work dealing with the Alps is, so far as can be learned, a Latin poem composed by Heinrich Moriti, a member of the Basel faculty and the friend of Erasmus. Soon after its appearance in 1514 we meet with ascents. Thus in 1518 a party of four Swiss¹⁴ visited Lucerne and gained permission of the village authorities to climb Mt. Pilatus, a feat which they accomplished without molestation from the restless spirit of the Roman proconsul supposed to dwell in the waters of a marshy lake near the summit. In keeping with the superstitious nature of the age, the story had grown up that the spirit of the suicide Pilate roamed over the earth until a wandering scholar got its consent to remain quietly in the waters of the lake on the mountain which bears his name. Only on Good Fridays could it rise to the surface; at other times it could be aroused by shouting or throwing stones into the lake, when a convulsion of nature would ensue. Finally the government of Lucerne forbade all strangers to approach the lake; in 1307 six clergymen were imprisoned for breaking this rule.¹⁵

The earliest important ascent, however, seems to have been made in 1536, when Rhellicanus climbed the Stockhorn near Thun (7,195 feet) and celebrated the undertaking in 130 Latin verses.¹⁶ Five years later Konrad Gesner, a professor at Zurich, indicted a letter to Vogel (Avienus) of Glarus, in which for the first time the modern romantic feeling was expressed. As this letter marks the first real break with the older period of fancied terrors¹⁷ and, therefore, a new epoch in the appreciation of the mountains, the following quotation from it is of interest:

I am resolved, henceforth, most learned Avienus, that as long as it may please God to grant me life, I will ascend several mountains, or at least one, every year, at the season when the flowers are in their glory, partly for the sake of examining them and partly for the sake of good bodily exercise and of mental delight. For how great a pleasure, think you, is it, how great a delight for a man touched as he ought to be, to wonder at the mass of the mountains as one gazes on their vastness, and to lift up one's head, as it were, amongst the clouds. The understanding is deeply moved, I know not wherefore, by their amazing height, and is driven to think of the Great Architect who made them; etc.¹⁸

¹⁴ The party included Vadianus—Joachim von Watt (1484-1551)—of St. Gallen; later in the same year, Duke Ulrich of Württemberg repeated the ascent. The account of Vadianus is presented in Gesner's tractate, mentioned in footnote 18.

¹⁵ Cf. Coolidge, *op. cit.*, 1889, pp. 11-12; Gribble, *op. cit.*, 1899, p. 45.

¹⁶ J. Müller, professor of "bonarum litterarum" at Berne (in Latin called Rhellicanus, after his native village of Rheliken, near Zurich), published his "Stockhornias" at Basel in 1537 (appended to his Latin translation of Plutarch's "Life of Homer"); all the Latin text and translation by Gribble, *op. cit.*, 1899, App. G, p. 277 *seqq.* and p. 39 *seqq.*

¹⁷ These terrors for the most part, however, kept up for the next two centuries; the last phase of the older period is marked by the work of G. S. Gruner: *Die Eisgebirge des Schweizerlandes*, 3 vols., Berne, 1760. A revised edition was published in 2 vols. in 1778 under the title of "Reisen durch die merkwürdigsten Gegenden Helvetiens."

¹⁸ Translated by Coolidge, *op. cit.*, 1889, pp. 12-13. This letter was first published as an introduction to Gesner's tractate "Libellus de lacte, et operibus lactariis, philologus pariter ac medicus," appearing in 1541; later, after ascending Pilatus, in 1555, he included it in his "Descriptio montis Practi sive montis Pilati"; it was also published at Zurich under the title "Epistola ad Jacobum Avienum de montium admiratione."

But Gesner was not alone in his appreciation of the mountains, as we see from the following quotation from the writings of his friend Marti, professor at Berne:

These are the mountains which form our pleasure and delight when we gaze at them from the highest parts of our city, and admire their mighty peaks and broken crags that threaten to fall at any moment. Who, then, would not admire, love, willingly visit, explore, and climb places of this sort? I should assuredly call those who are not attracted by them dolts, stupid dull fishes, and slow tortoises. . . . I am never happier than on the mountain crests, and there are no wanderings dearer to me than those on the mountains.¹⁹

In another passage he says he saw many inscriptions cut into stone by climbers on top of the Stockhorn; one in Greek read "The love of the mountains is best."²⁰

A similar change in feeling can be traced in contemporaneous art. The medieval painters, like the poets, felt no attraction for mountain scenery. In early Swiss views the spectator almost invariably has his back to the mountains. Dürer and his pupil Altdorfer were the first to show the change in their pictures, and so may be looked upon as the originators of modern landscape painting.²¹

The next important date in tracing the development of the *passion des montagnes* is 1574, the year in which Josias Simler of Zurich published a great commentary on the Alps,²² in which he gave a detailed description of the Alpine regions and devoted a chapter to the dangers and difficulties of climbing. He gives good advice to the climber, mentioning stocks, ropes, snow-shoes, crampons, and even tobogganing and glissading. He touches on the dangers of crossing snowfields and crevasses, and even mentions the use of black spectacles, "*vitrea conspicilia*," and burnt cork as a protection against the rays of the sun. In the preface he gives his point of view in the following passage:

The poets figured that the mountains were haunted by many divine beings—Pan, satyrs, fauns, and oreads; Parnassus, Helicon, with many other summits, were sacred to the gods. Doubtless the ancients wished to shadow forth by these fables the works and might of nature, most discernible in the mountains. By us, meanwhile, who cannot explain these riddles, nor indeed greatly desire to do so, it must nevertheless be confessed that lofty mountains are most worthy of deep study. For everywhere you turn, they present to every sense a multitude of objects to excite and delight the mind. They offer problems to our intellect; they amaze our souls. They remind us of the infinite variety of creation, and offer an unequalled field for the observation of the processes of nature.

From this we see that, whereas Gesner was the pioneer of the emotional

¹⁹ Quoted by Lunn, from Freshfield's translation, *op. cit.*, 1914, pp. 36-37.

²⁰ Lunn, *op. cit.*, 1914, p. 16.

²¹ Dürer, 1471-1528; Altdorfer, died 1538; they were followed by Wolf Huber and Lautensack; cf. E. W. Bredt: *Die Alpen und ihre Maler*.

²² "*De Alpibus commentarius*"; the edition of 1633 also contains his essay entitled "*Valesiae descriptio*." Simler makes it clear that the habit of visiting the Alps had become fashionable long before the close of the century; he says foreigners from all parts of Europe came to admire the mountains and explains the lack of interest in them among his countrymen as due to familiarity.

literature on the Alps, Simler was the forerunner of the more objective school; though a climber, he personally displayed comparatively little love or enthusiasm for the mountains.

A very similar sentiment is the following expressed by a traveler a few years later:

What, I pray you, is more pleasant, more delectable and more acceptable unto a man than to behold the height of hills, as it were the very Atlantes of heaven? to admire Hercules his pillars? to see the mountaines Taurus and Caucasus? to view the hill Olympus, the seat of Jupiter? to pass over the Alpes that were broken by Annibal's Vinegar? to climb up the Appenine promontory of Italy? from the hill Ida to behold the rising of the Sunne before the Sunne appears? to visit Pernassus and Helicon, the most celebrated seates of the Muses? Neither indeed is there any hill or hillocke, which doth not containe in it the most sweete memory of worthy matters.²³

Toward the middle of the seventeenth century the topography of Switzerland was accurately studied by Matthäus Merian and Martin Zeiller.²⁴ The chief merit of their published work was the seventy-five copperplate views of Swiss towns and castles. Near the end of the century a real guide book of the Alps was issued by the Zurich naturalist Wagner.²⁵ By the beginning of the eighteenth century Alpine literature was enriched by the labors of J. J. Scheuchzer, a professor at Zurich. In his great work he catalogues in Latin and German all the ranges, peaks, glaciers, passes, villages, and even pasture lands known to him, and supplements this with a mass of information which forms a summary of all that was so far known about the Alps.²⁶ But he manifested neither the sentimental love of the mountains which we see in Gesner nor the scientific interest of Simler. He must have been a poor mountaineer withal, for in one place he says: "anhelosae quidem sunt scansiones montium," and he failed even to reach the top of Pilatus because of "weariness." Moreover he was a firm believer in the notion already mentioned that dragons inhabited the mountains.

However, by this time only a few passes, as the Gemmi and Grimsel, were well known, and only a few of the lower summits, as Pilatus and the Stockhorn, had been reached. Not until the early eighteenth century did tourists from outside Switzerland visit the Alps in great numbers. Most of them, to be sure, were quite content to view the majesty of the glaciers and peaks from the towns at their bases.²⁷ But a general awakening to the glory of the higher summits began to be felt toward the middle of the cen-

²³ In T. Coryate's "Crudities," 1611, already mentioned in footnote 7; quoted by Lunn, *op. cit.*, 1914, p. 15.

²⁴ "Topographia Helvetiae, Rhaetiae, et Valesiae," Frankfurt, 1642. The text was written by Zeiller and the views were engraved by Merian. Between 1642 and 1688 Merian and his sons issued thirty volumes on the topography of Switzerland; see Coolidge, *op. cit.*, 1889, pp. 20-21.

²⁵ "Index memorabilium Helvetiae," 1684; a second edition called "Mercurius Helveticus" appeared in 1688.

²⁶ "Die Beschreibung der Naturgeschichte des Schweizerlandes," Zurich, 1706-08; more fully in his collected works, Leyden, 1723. He published the first accurate map of Switzerland.

²⁷ Thus we hear of Englishmen being conveyed by carriage from the Channel to Switzerland in sixteen days for twenty guineas.



FIG. 3.



FIG. 4.

FIG. 3—St. Rhémy, on the Italian side of the Great St. Bernard Pass route. The village is protected by woods against avalanches. Along the slope on the left ran the old Roman road, parts of which can still be seen.

FIG. 4—Looking down the Bernina Pass route between La Rōsa and Poschiavo.

tury. The earliest recorded snow peak to be ascended was the Titlis, reached in 1739 by a monk of Engelberg.²⁸ The huge glaciers of Mont Blanc—or Mont Maudit, as it was then called—ever visible from the streets of Geneva sixty miles away, were visited in 1741 by two Englishmen, Pococke and Windham, who may be regarded as the forerunners of the stream of British tourists.²⁹ The account of the visit of these “discoverers” of Chamonix is ludicrous in the extreme, but gives us an idea of a Swiss mountain village of that day. They entered Chamonix accompanied by a retinue of porters and guides, who were well armed against the “bandits” of the valley, whom they feared so much that they would not enter any house, but bivouacked in the open air.³⁰

In 1760 De Saussure, then a young professor at the newly founded Academy in Geneva, visited Chamonix with the express intention of ascending Mont Blanc for scientific purposes. The next year he came again and offered a prize to the man who would find a route to the top. For a quarter of a century various attempts were made to win it, but not until 1786 was a path discovered by the peasant Jacques Balmat, accompanied by Paccard, the village doctor.³¹ Scientific interest was the cause of most of the succeeding climbs until past the middle of the nineteenth century. To this category belong the ascent of the Jungfrau in 1811; of the Finsteraarhorn in 1812; of Monte Rosa in 1855; of the Dom in 1858; of the Aletschhorn in 1859; of the Weisshorn and Schreckhorn in 1861; of the Dent Blanche in 1862; and of the Grandes Jorasses and Aiguille Verte (both in the Mont Blanc massif) in 1865, the same year in which the Gabelhorn and Matterhorn were ascended in the Zermatt region. In 1854 an Englishman named Wills made the hazardous climb of the Wetterhorn from the Grindelwald

²⁸ The next two were the Buet (10,290 feet) near Chamonix, ascended in 1770 by the brothers Deluc, and the Velan (12,353 feet) in 1779 by Murith, the prior of the Great St. Bernard hospice.

In 1777 there appeared in Berne the first special guide-book to Switzerland, Pastor Wytenbach's “Instruction pour les Voyageurs qui vont voir les Glaciers et les Alpes du Canton de Berne,” in French and German; a second edition, enlarged to forty pages, appeared in 1787. Heidegger's “Handbuch für Reisende durch die Schweiz” appeared at Zurich in 1787-89 and was followed by two other editions, 1790-91 and 1797. It remained the chief Swiss guide-book until the work of Ebel, with which it was incorporated in 1818: for an account of several minor guides appearing between Heidegger's and Ebel's, see Coolidge, *op. cit.*, 1889, p. 37 *seqq.* Ebel's “Anleitung auf die nützlichste und genussvollste Art die Schweiz zu bereisen” appeared at Zurich, 1793, and remained the standard guide until the days of Murray.

²⁹ Of course Chamonix had been known to the monks of the Benedictine priory there since the thirteenth century. The first authentic date in the history of the valley is 1091, when Aymon, Count of Geneva, bestowed on the Benedictine monastery of St. Michel de la Cluse, near Turin, the “campus munitus.”

³⁰ Cf. Edward Whymper: Guide to Chamonix and the Range of Mont Blanc, 15th edition, 1910, Ch. 1.

³¹ As Mont Blanc was the first Swiss district to be minutely explored, the first special guide-book was written about it: “Itinéraire de la vallée de Chamonix,” by J. P. Berthout van Berchem, Lausanne, 1790. The artist Bourrit, who had made many attempts to scale Mont Blanc before Balmat's success, wrote an “Itinéraire de Genève, Lausanne et Chamouny,” 1791.

As against the story of the ignominious part played by Dr. Paccard in the first ascent of the mountain as promulgated long ago by Dumas in his “Impressions de Voyage,” see the true account by H. Dübi: Paccard wider Balmat, oder die Entwicklung einer Legende, Berne, 1913, which is based on the notes of an eyewitness (Baron von Gersdorf) which have recently been discovered in the public library of Götting. In the writer's “The Ascent of Mont Blanc,” *Natl. Geogr. Mag.*, Vol. 24, 1913, pp. 861-942, the legendary account was followed. For a summary of Dr. Dübi's arguments, see review of his book by Douglas Freshfield in the *Alpine Journ.*, Vol. 27, 1913, pp. 202-209.

side, and so this date is generally taken as the beginning of the passion for mountaineering as a form of healthy and manly sport. Since then it has taken on great dimensions, until now practically every cliff and crag in the Alps has been repeatedly ascended.

Nor should we, in conclusion, overlook the literary influences which, in the eighteenth century, contributed largely to the growth of the romantic sentiment about mountains. The poem by the Swiss physiologist Albrecht von Haller, entitled "Die Alpen" (Berne, 1732), is perhaps the earliest work of this character in the century. But the greatest influence was that exerted by the epoch-making writings of Rousseau, who proclaimed the romantic view of nature in all its phases and especially that of the mountains, which gave a tremendous impetus to the "play-ground" idea of Switzerland. The "Nouvelle Héloïse"³² is the main exponent of the increasing love of the mountains. In his "Confessions"³³ occurs the well-known passage in which he avows his repugnance to the plains and celebrates the beauty of torrents, rocks, woods, rugged paths, and precipices. The English poet Gray, on the strength of many passages in his letters from the Lake District in 1769, has wrongly been given the honor of having been the first to arouse interest in mountains and mountaineering. Years before (in August, 1741) he had written in the Album of the brothers at the Grande Chartreuse the beautiful *Alcaic* lines beginning

O Tu, severi Religio loci

in which he first revealed his passion for "niveas rupes" and "fera juga"—

Clivosque praeuptos, sonantes
Inter aquas nemorumque noctem.

He marks the transition from the artificiality of Pope and his followers to the revival in English letters inaugurated by Cowper, Burns, and other poets, toward the end of the century. He shares with Thomson the honor of restoring English poetry to nature. Born and bred within sight of the Cheviot and Lammermuir hills, Thomson was inspired by their rugged scenery, though his musings

On rocks and hills and towers and wandering streams

were at best those of one who still looked upon these features as vague, far away, and gloomy. Macpherson, the author of the poems attributed to Ossian³⁴ so strangely popular in Europe during the eighteenth century,

³² It appeared in 1759; though the sentiment is diffused throughout the book, the leading passage is in *Lettre XXIII*, wherein the lover retires to the Valais and reflects on his impressions of the mountains and climbing.

³³ The "Confessions," though written from 1766 on, were first published in 1782, four years after the philosopher's death. The famous passage is at the end of Bk. IV: "Au reste, on sait déjà ce que j'entends par un beau pays. Jamais pays de plaine, quelque beau qu'il fût, ne parut tel à mes yeux. Il me faut des torrents, des rochers, des sapins, des bois noirs, des montagnes, des chemins raboteux à monter et à descendre, des précipices à mes côtés qui me fassent bien peur."

³⁴ "Fragments of Ancient Poetry, collected in the Highlands," appeared in 1760; "Fingal, an Epic Poem in six books," appeared in "Poems of Ossian" in 1762, and also "Temora, an Epic Poem in eight books," in 1763.

first revealed the grandeur of his Scotch Highlands, where mountain, glen, and sea were joined: his descriptions of scenery surely quickened the sense of glory as distinct from the horror of mountain scenery. In consequence the Highlands, previously looked upon as the abode of half-savage men, now began to be visited for pleasure.³⁵

The initial impulse given by these lovers of nature was increased by the romantic writers of England.³⁶ These, both poets and prose authors, were at first content to follow the Greek ideal of the delights of more harmonious scenes, but soon felt the influence of the elemental in both sea and mountain. The greatest of them was Wordsworth, the chief interpreter of nature in all literature.³⁷ He brought to English ears a new message, which had been but faintly heralded by Thomson and Gray. For before his day English poetry had displayed but little serious interest in the delineation of nature, which was still largely impersonal and objective. Where his predecessors had been content to follow the "pathetic fallacy" and read their own feelings into it, Wordsworth let it speak its own message. Not only the outward aspects, but the very soul of nature is revealed in his poetry. His influence, like that of Rousseau, in making it once more subjective and poetic, cannot be overestimated. It is to these two, then, though they were not the first, that we are mostly indebted for our modern sentimental attitude towards nature, especially for our appreciation of the ruggedness of mountain scenery.

³⁵ The usual repugnance to mountain scenery is well seen in the contemporary dictum of Johnson, who thus wrote of his impressions of Highland scenery, which he viewed in 1773 on his famous journey to the Hebrides:—"It will readily occur that this uniformity of barrenness can afford very little amusement to the traveller; that it is easy to sit at home and conceive rocks, heaths and waterfalls, and that these journeys are useless labors, which neither impregnate the imagination nor inform the understanding" (*Journey to the Western Isles of Scotland*, 1775—the passage before the description of Glensheals). Similar sentiments were expressed by his friend Richardson, in the description of the crossing of the Mont Cenis pass, in "The History of Sir Charles Grandison," 1753, and also by Goldsmith, who, writing from Holland, spoke with disdain of the Scottish scenery which he had just left.

³⁶ Roughly from 1800 to 1850 (or better perhaps from the American Revolution to the accession of Victoria in 1837).

³⁷ In 1797 Wordsworth, his sister Dorothy, and Coleridge retired to the Quantock hills of Somerset with the deliberate intention of making literature "interest mankind permanently," which they believed classic poetry could not do. The result of this purpose was "Lyrical Ballads," appearing in 1798, the spirit of which is best reflected in the two chief poems of the volume, "The Rime of the Ancient Mariner" and "Lines Written a Few Miles Above Tintern Abbey."